

Date: 28 November 2016

Our ref: PU/IW/VMC/MC/5/8/2

APPENDIX 1

Your ref:

Councillor K Wright
Members' Mail

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Dear Councillor Wright

Planning Protocol

Thank you for your letter dated 1 September 2006 concerning the role of Area Plans Sub Committee Chairman at the District Development Control Committee in relation to referred items.

I do not agree that the Chairman of an Area Plans Sub Committee is under a duty to support the views of that Sub Committee at the District Development Control Committee. There is a duty in my view for a Chairman of a Plans Sub Committee to present the views of the Sub Committee in so far as they are known, particularly in cases where the Sub Committee has made a decision or submitted a recommendation. If a planning application is referred without that debate, for whatever reason, to the District Development Control Committee, it is clearly impossible for the Chairman of the Area Plans Sub Committee to support a view.

When the matter arises again at the District Development Control Committee, my view is that the application starts afresh. Bear in mind, that between the Area Plans Sub Committee meeting and the District Development Control Committee, there may well be further developments: new information may be received, new policy advice may be given by Planning Officers, a fresh set of members may ask different questions and clarify points that were not raised or thought of at the Area Plans Sub Committee. This is why it may not be wise for an Area Plans Sub Committee Chairman to be too dogmatic about his position until all the new facts and information are available at the District Development Control Committee meeting.

This is a wider question than Development Control in that it does arise from time to time in relation to any subordinate body which reports to its parent committee or the Council. Over the years, I have seen Chairmen of subordinate bodies present the views of their committees but make it clear that it is not their personal view and that they do not intend to vote for the recommendation. I admit that these occasions are very rare but these are matters of conscience which no protocol can really cover.

To repeat: I think the duty of an Area Plans Sub Committee Chairman is to present any views from the Sub Committee without necessarily being mandated to vote in a certain way, particularly if new information is available at the District Development Committee.

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I am happy to cover this point in future training sessions on the Planning Protocol.

Yours sincerely

Ian Willett
Head of Research and Democratic Services